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ABSTRACT

This essay traces the development of American Indian higher education from first contact to the 1970s. English colonials took an early interest in educating Indians for cultural change. Several 17th- and 18th-century colleges, such as Harvard and Dartmouth, recruited American Indians to train as missionaries and teachers to their own peoples, but most Indian students died of disease. In the early 1800s, the Choctaws and Cherokees established training schools, and after the Civil War, churches established colleges for Indians as well. In the 19th century, the federal government did not support higher education for American Indians, whom it aimed to turn into individual land-owning farmers. At the start of the 20th century, only one state school and one church-run school served Indian higher education needs. In the 1930s, federal support for Indian higher education began to develop, and returning World War II veterans added to the impetus. By 1957, over 2,000 Indians were enrolled in colleges, and financial aid was offered by tribes, federal and state governments, and private organizations. However, Indian educational programs at all levels suffered from poor quality and high dropout r. .es. Programs established under the rubric of self-determination in the 1960s were shaped at first by federal, not tribal, standards. Initiatives toward community-controlled education led to the development of the tribal community college system. There are now 29 tribally controlled colleges, comprising the American Indian Higher Education Consortium. Their primary strength is in offering education at home so that students do not need to leave their communities to pursue higher education. Their largest challenge remains making higher education relevant within the community and supportive of tribally-defined community development. Contains 38 notes. (SV)

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American Indian Higher Education Before 1974:

From Colonization to Self-Determination

by
David R.M. Beck

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Although Europeans and Americans involved American Indians in their educational systems almost from first contact, it was only in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that the United States government made a full scale assault and took control of virtually all aspects of American Indian education, with the purpose of forcing or encouraging assimilation. This assault began with treaty-based support for education in government schools run by both federally hired school teachers and missionaries, paid for directly with money the tribes received for their lands. By the late nineteenth century the federal government, recognizing the failure of day schools in the assimilation process, turned to the use of boarding schools, on-reservation and off, through which Indians were trained in vocational and domestic skills and which were intended to sever children's ties to their cultures. During this time few Indians were educated at a college level. The English and later Americans expected those who were educated to use their educations to help in the assimilation process. These educational systems, while disrupting (though not destroying) reservation life and culture, focussed almost exclusively on industrial and domestic, not intellectual, training. The quality of education provided was so low that even Indian students wishing to attend college were often academically ineligible for entrance.

It was not until the 1960s and 1970s, when Indian communities were finally able to begin the arduous (and still-continuing) process of retaking control of their educational systems and institutions, from the grade school through the college levels, that the situation began to seem at all promising. From the pre-school and grade school levels to the founding of the Tribal Community Colleges and private Indian-run colleges such as NAES, there were the beginnings of an attempt to infuse tribal cultural knowledge into teaching and learning systems in ways in which Indian communities could adapt curriculum to their specific needs, and ultimately control the standards for education.

Colonial North America

Although most American Indian nations and tribes did not have formal educational institutions we would recognize as schools in the years before European contact,[1] all those nations had internal educational systems that trained their members to function appropriately in society, and trained some or all members at levels of advanced learning in various areas such as science, medicine, agriculture, diplomacy, warfare, cosmology and history. The results of this advanced education were recognized by Europeans from the beginning. American Indian foods helped feed the world after contact, American Indian medicines help stock modern hospitals, and the Iroquois confederacy is believed by many to have been one of the bases for the American federal structure and constitution, as just a few examples.[2] Nonetheless, incongruously, because Indians lacked the technology and Christianity of western civilization, Europeans and Americans believed that Indians lacked basic educational training, and from the beginning tried to fill that perceived void.

In that part of North America which would become the United States, English colonials took an interest in educating Indians "as the ultimate tool for achieving cultural change among Indian people."[3] This interest and these purposes extended to higher education as well. Several colleges and universities in seventeenth and eighteenth century English North America recruited and received American Indian students in programs to train them to become teachers and missionaries amongst their own people. These schools, which received large amounts of money from charitable and mission societies to educate Indian students, served only a few Indian people in over a century. Most died while in school, and only one Indian apparently actu-

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ally received a college degree in this time, himself dying soon thereafter from disease.

Beginning in 1616 money was collected and land set aside for an Indian college in Virginia, for example, but these plans "came to an abrupt end when the Indians attacked the Virginia colonists in 1622," killing twenty eight percent of the colonists, including the college deputy.[4]

Harvard College enrolled its first Indian student, John Sassamon, "a converted Massachusett," in 1653, but he was not a degree candidate. Sassamon helped John Eliot translate the Bible into Natick, a dialect of the Massachusetts language, and was killed in 1675 for treachery in events leading to the King Philip's War. Between 1656 and 1672 Harvard enrolled some 40 Indian students in a grammar school program. In 1656 the school built an Indian college building, but apparently only four Indian degree candidates ever enrolled into the program there. Two died while enrolled (one from unknown causes, one being killed by other Indians), one stayed for only a year, and the other, Caleb Cheeshahteaumauk, an Algonquian from Chickemmoo on Martha's Vineyard, received his A.B. degree but then died from consumption soon after graduation. This program died out before 1700. As Margaret Szasz, the premier historian of American Indian education in this period put it, disease and the King Philip's War "sap[ped] the strength of the impulse for Indian education in seventeenth century New England."[5]

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the College of William and Mary enrolled Indian students in a program to educate them to preach the gospel among "western Indians." From this time until the American Revolution anywhere from one or two to 24 Indian students attended school there each year, with the peak years occurring between 1710 and 1722. Instruction to the Indian students was not at college level, however, and though it was intended to create missionaries to serve among their own people, none of the students became such.

The College of New Jersey, later known as Princeton, also became involved in educating Indians, but apparently on a very small scale: only three Delawares were recorded as enrolled there, one dying of consumption, the second not being viewed as fit for college life, and the third attending the school until the American Revolution occurred, and later becoming a school teacher.

Dartmouth College was actually founded by Eleazer Wheelock as a charity school to educate Indian and white youth. Inspired by Samson Occum, a Mohegan who had been tutored by Wheelock and became a leading minister in colonial New England, Wheelock believed that Indians could be educated to preach the gospel among their own people and that this Christianity, together with instruction in agriculture, would lead to more peaceful relations along the American frontier. Indians who had attended the school (before it became a college) faced prejudice when they tried to become part of colonial New England society, however, and so Wheelock found that he had little support from even those Indians who attended his school. Occum went to England to raise money for the school (and also to argue on behalf of a land case the Mohegan had brought against Connecticut), spending two and a half years there and away from his family, only to return and face the conclusion "that Dartmouth would never fulfill their expectations as a place for Indians to receive a college education."[6]

In fact only three Indians graduated from the school in the eighteenth century, and eight in the nineteenth century. One, John Masta, went on to earn an M.D. in 1850, becoming prob-

American Indian Chicago Conference, 1961

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George Bennett, NAES Graduate '82

Zena Reeves, Former Director, O-Wai-Ya-Wa Elementary School

Luis Delgado, Former Director of Chicago Campus

ably the first Indian physician trained in an American school. It was not until the 1970s that Dartmouth finally revived a program for Indian students. As one observer has written, as with other institutions of higher education in the colonial and early American years, "Dartmouth had the potential of becoming an institution that provided for the educational needs of a significant number of American Indians, but instead it developed into a prestigious private college primarily for white males."[7]

Another school founded for Indians, this one with Oneida money from land sales in the 1794 treaty, served 98% white students by 1799 and opened as a college in 1812. That school is now Hamilton College, a liberal arts school in Clinton, New York.[8]

These early efforts were doomed to failure. Though all of this represents a significant occurrence in the history of Indian people within western institutions of higher education, it meant little in terms of how Indian societies continued to educate their youth. Except along the east coast, Indian nations remained the most powerful forces across most of the North American continent and Europeans could not force the Indian societies to conform to western norms. Benjamin Franklin's famous description of the 1744 reply of Six Nations chiefs to the offer made by Virginia representatives to educate Indian children well describes the incompatibility of European higher education systems for American Indians living in cultures and societies with their own long-established methods of education:

> *Several of our young people were formerly brought up at the colleges of the Northern Provinces; they were instructed in all your science; but when they came back to us, they were bad runners; ignorant of every means of living in the woods; unable to bear either cold or hunger; knew neither how to build a cabin, take a deer, or kill an enemy; spoke our language imperfectly; were therefore neither fit for hunters, warriors, or counselors; they were totally good for nothing. We are however not the less obliged by your kind offer, though we decline accepting it: And to show our greatful sense of it, if the gentlemen of Virginia will send us a dozen of their sons, we will take great care of their education, instruct them in all we know, and make men of them.*[9]

The Nineteenth Century

As Euro-American populations expanded across the North American continent in an explosive growth during the nineteenth century, decimating tribal economies and populations, Indian nations lost control of their systems of education. Backed first by a powerful military and later by a crushing bureaucracy, Americans both created and took control of the political institutions which made and enforced decisions affecting tribes,including in the educational arena. Many treaties involving land sales set aside tribal moneys to support education, most of which went to missionary and occasionally federally operated schools. Higher education was rarely part of this compact; however, in the case of a few tribes higher education of one form or another was actively pursued in the nineteenth century.

The Choctaw, for example, established an academy in Kentucky in 1825. This operated for twenty years and provided higher quality education (though not at a higher education level) for Indian students than any other institution in the first half of the 1800s. Jointly administered by church, federal and tribal officials, it fell apart when quality of education failed to meet tribal standards and after federal removal of the Choctaw from the area occurred. In 1842 the Choctaw Council voted to withdraw all support from the Academy, instead providing aid for Choctaw students attending Ohio University, Asbury University and Jefferson College.

Soon thereafter, in 1846 the Cherokee Nation in Oklahoma established male and female seminaries. These closed during Civil War years, and reopened in 1875. They offered religious training and, beginning in 1900, normal school (teacher's) training. These schools were not college level, but of a more specialized and intellectual nature than training schools operated with funds from federal treaty obligations. The women's seminary eventually became Northeastern Oklahoma State University, which even in the 1980s had an Indian enrollment of nearly 1,000, fourth highest in the United States.

In addition to tribes, churches established colleges to educate Indians as well. "Soon after the Civil War, several church supported colleges were founded, ostensibly for the higher education of Indians. Most ... had little permanent influence on Indian education, but a few survived as predominantly white institutions." This repeats a familiar historical pattern. Presbyterian School for Girls, founded in 1882 in Muskogee, later moved to Tulsa and since 1920 has been Tulsa University.[10]

The most notorious of these, however, is Ottawa University. Three men, a part Ojibwe man who had been adopted by the Ottawa in Kansas, an adulterous, alcoholic Baptist minister, and a conniving federal Indian agent serving the Sac and Fox tribe, founded this school in 1860 with collusion from tribal members for the purpose of gaining access to Ottawa tribal land and funds. Although the Ottawa were removed to Indian Territory in 1867, the college continued to be built. Ottawa children, originally offered education there as part of the bargain, were not allowed in, and it became a school for white children. The school itself continued to deny its unseemly heritage: A school publication [from 1972-73] states, "the University was founded in 1862 on land given by the Ottawa Indians." In 1960 the federal government recognized the fraud perpetrated on the Ottawa and the Indian Claims Commission awarded over $400,000 in restitution to descendants of those who were ripped off in the scheme.[11]

Despite these examples, the federal government made no effort to support higher education for American Indians. The day schools and boarding schools run by federal government and church missions beginning in the treaty period and extending well into the twentieth century did little to encourage Indians to pursue higher education, although their purposes were largely to force assimilation and to destroy Indian children's connections to their own cultures. In 1873 as the federal government began to establish the boarding school system Commissioner of Indian Affairs Edward P. Smith wrote, "Upon no other subject ... is there such entire agreement of opinion as upon the necessity of labor schools for Indians." These manual labor schools would be used to teach Indian children agricultural and domestic skills, since "barbarism can be cured only by education."

Day schools, the Commissioner wrote, had proven inadequate at teaching children English, dressing them in clothing "suitabl[e] ... to the school-room," and in regularizing their working hours, the key indicators, apparently, of civilization. "The boarding school, on the contrary, takes the youth under constant care, has him always at hand, and surrounds him by an English-speaking community, and above all, gives him instruction in the first lessons of civilization, which can be found in a well-ordered home."[12]

In fact, soon after this, in 1887, Congress passed the highly detrimental Dawes or General Allotment Act, described by the Board of Indian Commissioners as "a mighty pulverizing engine for breaking up the tribal mass."[13] The intention of this was to provide individual land ownership. Indian individuals would become farmers as a method for integrating them into U.S. society. The education system which supported this policy left little room for Indians to pursue higher education, and very few did. Thus at the same time as the United States destroyed traditional tribal systems which provided higher education (in forms lacking the institutional base of western higher education), the federal government also established a system for "welcoming" Indians into American society without seeing a need for Indians to participate in American higher education.

Some American individuals however did see a limited need for Indians in higher education, with the same idea as a basis that had been used by the colonial English: that educated Indians could return to work among their people and help in the assimilation process. Some individual Indians therefore received college degrees and advanced degrees as well, the latter especially in the field of medicine. Many of these individuals then walked the narrow line between supporting federal assimilationist policies and attempting to work on behalf of their people, which based on their own experiences often translated into supporting assimilation, though for different reasons and with different ends in mind than their American counterparts.

Most of the founders of the Society of American Indians (SAI) for example were college educated. The SAI, founded in 1911, was a reform-oriented organization made up of educated middle class Indians who were largely estranged from and living away from their communities. The members published a journal, educated the non-Indian world about Indian issues, worked on behalf of various Indian issues on a national level, and created a new class of Indian people, referred to by scholars as "pan-Indians," whose strongest links to Indians were among themselves rather than among communities.

Charles Eastman, a Santee man for example, graduated from Dartmouth and earned his medical degree from Boston Union Medical School. Charles E. Dagenett, Peoria, another Carlisle alum, graduated from Eastman College in Poughkeepsie, New York, after attending Dickenson College. Carlos Montezuma, Yavapai, graduated from the University of Illinois in 1884 and then earned a medical degree

Mayvonne Solorio, NAES graduate, '83

Willard LaMere NAES graduate, 1977

Don Bishop, NAES graduate '80

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from Chicago Medical College. Sherman Coolidge, Arapaho, earned a B.D. degree from Bishop Whipple's Seabury Divinity School. Henry Roe Cloud, Winnebago, graduated from Yale University. Arthur C. Parker, Seneca, was eventually awarded an honorary M.S. degree from the University of Rochester and honorary doctorates from two colleges. Thomas L. Sloan, who identified himself as one sixteenth Omaha, became an attorney, but passed the bar without benefit of law school or even an undergraduate education.[14]

In 1880 Indian University, a Baptist-run school, was founded in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, "primarily to train teachers and preachers among the Five Civilized Tribes, reflecting the long standing objective of converting the Indians." In 1883 it graduated its first Bachelor's candidates; in 1885 it moved to land given by the Creek Nation in Muskogee; in 1910 it was renamed Bacone College. It eventually became a junior college, and until the 1960s remained "the only predominantly Indian college in the United States."[15]

Meanwhile, among the Lumbee in North Carolina, a normal school was established to train Indians from Robeson County to teach among their own people. Founded in 1887, it became Pembroke State College for Indians after it granted its first bachelor's degrees in 1940. In 1935 it had begun offering courses for college credit; these were beyond the normal school coursework. After World War II the college opened its doors to other Indians but specifying they be from federally recognized tribes. In 1953 the school began to admit non-Indians; after the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education case this included African-American as well as white students in the tri-racially mixed county. Today the Indian population of the school stands at just below twenty-five per cent.[16] In the early years of the school's history its mission was similar to those schools which had failed in the colonial period: to educate Indians to return among their people and advance the assimilation process.

Roslyn LaPier
NAES faculty

The Twentieth Century

Only one state school and only one church-run school thus served higher education needs of American Indians, although Indians attended a few other colleges or universities. The federal training and vocational schools ignored any intellectual potentials of Indian students, training them strictly for manual labor. The Meriam Report, the massive federal study of conditions in Indian country which was completed in 1928 and showed the utter failure of the federal policy of assimilation, pointed out that higher education was virtually non-existent for Indians for several reasons:

> *"At present the chief bar to the provision of higher education for such Indians as could profit by it is lack of adequate secondary school facilities.... Furthermore, the secondary work offered at these schools would hardly be accepted by most reputable universities throughout the United States. This is not primarily because of the half-day industrial plan, though this affects the situation somewhat, but mainly because of the difficulty so frequently referred to in this report, namely, low standards of personnel. Almost the first requisite for an "accredited" high school, whether the accrediting is done by the state or by regional associations, is that the teachers shall be graduates of standard four-year colleges with some professional preparation in education courses. So far as can be ascertained no government Indian school meets this minimum requirement."*

The few students who did attend college or university generally received their primary and secondary educations in public or private schools outside the government school systems. The report found the only public, non-Indian college with a significant population of Indian students to be the University of Oklahoma.[17] The report led to a federal push to encourage Indian students to pursue higher education, with scholarships offered especially in nursing, home economics and forestry. By 1933, 161 Indians were being helped with federal and tribal education grants.

In 1932, however, Ruth Muskrat Bronson made a statistical analysis of American Indian students in higher education, and found only 52 Indians in the United States with college degrees, less than 400 in college, and only five schools offering scholarships to Indian students.[18] The latter is especially ironic considering that more than that number of colleges and universities in the United States were originally founded to educate Indian people, several of those with Indian moneys or money earmarked specifically for Indians!

The Collier regime for the first time since the treaty years began, though incompletely and haltingly, to recognize the value of Indian governance of Indian affairs. This would require

higher education on the part of Indian people who would be leaders. Returning World War II veterans added to the impetus for higher education, and the GI Bill provided opportunities to pursue that education, though relatively fewer Indians than white veterans took advantage of this. By 1957 there were approximately 2,000 Indians enrolled in college.[19] A 1956 Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) publication lists seventeen tribes offering college scholarships for Indian students, with two others considering doing so. Several church groups and private organizations, the federal government, three states (Minnesota, Montana, and South Dakota), and the Territory of Alaska also offered aid specifically to Indian students seeking a college education.[20]

The situation for Indians in higher education however, far from providing a base for optimism, remained in crisis. This crisis extended to both Indian individuals and Indian communities. In the late 1960s Congress studied the state of Indian education in the United States and labelled it a national tragedy. The committee report said, "We are shocked at what we discovered," and challenged the nation to rectify the conditions. "We have concluded that our national policies for educating American Indians are a failure of major proportions," the committee concluded. The problem began at the lower levels. Over sixty percent of Indian children attended federally run schools, but the problems occurred across the board.

"What concerned us most deeply as we carried out our mandate," they wrote of the two year study whose findings mirrored those of the Meriam Report some four decades earlier, "was the low quality of virtually every aspect of the schooling available to Indian children." The committee found that only 18% of Indian students from federal schools went on to attend college. Of all Indian students attending college, a whopping 97% dropped out. Of those earning a degree, only one in a hundred earned a graduate level degree. This means that only one half of one percent of Indian people earned a college degree, and only one percent of those completed graduate school.[21] In 1962 for example there were some 4,000 Indian college students, but the graduating classes of 1966 contained only 66 Indian students who completed four year degrees.[22] If these numbers are accurate this represents a dismal graduation rate of under 1.7%. This left entire communities, urban and reservation, with virtually no college graduates.

A study based on interviews of Indians involved in higher education reported in 1978 that the dropout rate remained at 79-93% for Indian students, and listed five major reasons. The most important of these was the poor nature and low quality of previous education. The other four reasons, all equally contributing, included personal finances, institutional racism coupled with personal discrimination, a lack of relevant role models, and cultural differences between the Indian students and everyone else in the college community.[23]

A compounding problem was the irrelevance of higher education programs to American Indian communities. The programs established under the rubric of self-determination in the 1960s predicated their work on the notion that education was the key to Indian communities being able to take charge of their own affairs. Indeed, in the Senate report on Indian education, Senator Edward Kennedy declared that education would be the key to ending poverty and its many manifestations in Indian country. The committee's recommendations included thirteen proposals for improving higher education for Indians.[24] Some of these eventually became policy, and one forms the basis for federal support of the Tribal Community Colleges. But as Vine Deloria observed about federal spending on Indian higher education in this era, "Education was conceived as the handmaiden of development," and fellowships were given to encourage development as defined in terms of federal, not tribal, standards.[25]

In 1969 the American Indian Graduate Center was established to sponsor scholarships for Indian students seeking master's, doctoral and professional degrees. After this, in coordination with aggressive University programs, a professional class of American Indian leaders began to receive training that has helped reshape Indian country. The significant increase in Indian attorneys for example has been credited with the pursuit of claims and treaty rights cases by tribes in the last two decades.[26]

The BIA involved itself directly in the higher education business at this time, supporting three junior colleges for Indian students. Haskell Institute, which had been founded as an off-reservation boarding school in 1884, became a junior college in 1970, the BIA's first degree granting school. Haskell earned accreditation with the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools in 1979. Southwest Polytechnic Institute was founded in Albuquerque in 1971. The Institute of American Indian Arts, IAIA, founded in 1962 as Santa Fe Indian

Ina Jacobs, NAES graduate '90 and faculty

Simon Ortiz Guest Lecturer

Kathleen Goodman, NAES Graduate '84

School, became a candidate for two-year college level accreditation in 1978.[27]

The Seeds of Self Determination

While some of these programs provided a helpful educational outlet for American Indian individuals seeking a higher education, they did little to meet the educational needs of Indian communities. Indian graduates returning to their home communities, in fact, did not fit in. Their academic training did not allow most to conceive problem resolution in community terms, so they came into conflict with established community leaders and community norms. The reconciliation of young educated people returning to their communities is only now occurring in the 1990s as communities demand the skills the graduates have and as the graduates in their turn recognize the value of sacred tribal tradition.

That process of reconciliation is possible because of a parallel movement in terms of Indian higher education that began in the 1950s and gained strength in the late 1960s and early 1970s: community controlled and defined higher education. This occurred in a variety of ways, including both tribal and private initiative. It can perhaps trace its intellectual roots to the Workshops in American Indian Affairs and the 1961 American Indian Chicago Conference, and the educational activism sparked by Indian leaders in the 1960s.

Both the Workshop and the Chicago Conference were originally conceived by non-Indians, but the significance of those events lies in the work done by Indian people who participated in them and in some ways were transformed by the experience. Faith Smith, President and cofounder of NAES College, currently the only private, Indian-operated B.A. institution in the United States, has said that this "important major gathering done outside of the political, tribal council process set the stage for other things to happen," on the one hand in development of Indian organizations, and on the other hand in "what is called networking today," the development of individual contacts among participants who have relied on each other through the decades since.[28] Dr. Sol Tax, a principal organizer of both the Workshops and the Chicago conference, and a founding member of the NAES College Board of Trustees, has called the workshops "almost the beginning of a pattern for NAES."[29]

The Workshops were inside of but marginal to academia in part because academia was only marginally relevant to Indian communities and in part because Indian communities were virtually insignificant within academia. The workshops were run from 1956 through the late 1960s, first at Colorado College, then at the University of Colorado at Boulder. American Indian students from throughout the United States were invited to apply, could earn scholarships paid by the University of Chicago, and could earn college credit. The student base at least in the early years consisted of a mixed variety of students, from those just leaving high school to some in their early thirties involved in graduate study.[30]

The program intended to boost self-image by teaching the students about Indian cultures and the American culture and to develop academic and communication skills as well. "[T]he most important contributions that the Workshops have made to their Indian participants," according to information Rosalie Wax, one of the early program directors, gathered from interviewing participants, was that "they came to realize that Indians are not utterly isolated and powerless peoples." Emphasis on Indian contributions made to the larger society and common problems faced by Indian communities and individuals, as well as the simple process of interacting with each other, fostered this changed attitude among the participants.[31] One participant indicated that this was the first time she was able to learn about and discuss Indian issues within an educational setting.[32]

The program used Indian faculty and staff as part of the education process, a practice virtually unknown in American higher education circles. In its second year the Cherokee anthropologist Robert K. Thomas, then an advanced graduate student at the University of Chicago, served as director. He remained involved in the program as teaching faculty in later years. D'Arcy McNickle, Flathead, Director of American Indian Development and the first Indian person to publish a book on Indian-white relations (in 1949) also served as advisor, and beginning in 1960 as organizer of the program. In addition, the program staff brought in prominent Indian leaders for presentations and discussion on a regular basis.[33] Though some criticize the program for supporting culturally biased (i.e. prevailing) scientific approaches to understanding Indian cultures and societies, it served to empower many of the student participants by giving them a forum in which to begin to attempt to understand the dynamics of their worlds.[34] The networks of helpful contacts established by the participants included McNickle

and Thomas, on whom many relied throughout the coming years.[35] Robert Thomas, for example, served as a founding member of the NAES College Board of Trustees when two Workshop alumni, Robert V. Dumont, Jr., and Faith Smith, founded the college, which was incorporated in 1974.

Other private Indian Colleges were established in the early 1970s, including Flaming Rainbow University in Tahlequah, Oklahoma (1971), which has since ceased operation, and Inupiat University of the Arctic in Barrow, which was founded in the wake of the 1971 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. Inupiat closed in 1981.[36] During their brief lifespans these offered signs that Indian communities were beginning the process of shaping their educational futures.

The other significant higher educational effort by Indian communities in the 1960s and early 1970s, which has had broad-reaching effect in Indian country and has gained federal financial as well as tribal support, is the Tribal Community College system. The creation of Navajo Community College in 1968 was quickly followed by Oglala Sioux Community College at Pine Ridge in 1970 and Sinte Gleska College at Rosebud in 1971. In 1971 Standing Rock formed its first Community College Committee, leading to the establishment of that school. Cheyenne River Community College was founded in 1972, as was Turtle Mountain. 1973 saw the establishment of Nebraska Indian Community College, Sisseton-Wahpeton Community College, Lummi Community College and Fort Berthold Community College. Throughout the 1970s more were founded.

Despite these positive strides, for a long time the tribally controlled colleges benefitted little from federal money which was supposedly intended for Indian education. Title III of the 1965 Education Act provided funding for developing schools of higher education which serve minority populations, and this was soon applied to Indian populations as well. However, as with previous efforts, this often helped non-Indian institutions as much as it helped Indian institutions. Even as late as 1979, of the 25 Title III grants that went to schools serving Indian populations, only 3 went directly to tribally run schools. Four others served non-Indian community colleges with high Indian service populations and the remaining 18 went to Indian programs at white schools. Until the passage of the 1978 Tribally Controlled Community College Assistance Act, most of the funds and therefore federally supported programs were controlled by non-Indian people and institutions.[37]

Amazingly, despite this early failure of the federal government to recognize that community based education must be controlled by communities, tribal colleges began to appear throughout the country. The efforts of the Navajo and other early colleges paved the way for the establishment of tribally controlled colleges throughout the nation. There are now 29 such colleges, which have banded together as the American Indian Higher Education Consortium. Most offer Associates of Arts (two year) degrees. Their primary strength is in offering education at home so that students do not need to leave their communities to continue their formal learning. Their largest challenge remains making that education not only relevant within the community, but supportive of community development in tribally defined terms.

All of these efforts began to provide glimmers of hope for higher education in Indian country by the mid-1970s. For the first time since the treaty era began a significant mass of Indian individuals became exposed to higher education and a significant number of Indian communities began to take active, participatory interest in that education. Nonetheless, attrition problems continued to plague Indian students attending conventional colleges and universities, even those receiving federal support for their Indian programs; private Indian-run schools faced problems of funding as well as accreditation in systems unfamiliar with colleges such as these; tribal community colleges existed (and still exist) in only a relatively sparse number of the hundreds of Indian communities throughout the United States.[38]

These new challenges in this dawning era of educational self-determination are more sig-

Lenora Red Elk, NAES graduate '84 and Tribal Language Faculty

James Stiffarm NAES graduate 1984

American Indian Chicago Conference, 1961

nificant but less paralyzing than those posed by the paternalistic ways in which the federal government and American society has historically treated Indians when they have been in charge of Indian education. As communities began to take control of their educational institutions they in effect welcomed the responsibility of redefining higher education and their entire educational systems. They were forced to look to the future at the same time as they tried to undo the harmful effects of the past. The structure and content of higher education in America has never met Indian community needs; redefining both is a painful and energizing process that demands cooptation of the system to be relevant to tribal needs, using communal knowledge and values as a base for instruction and learning in a way that strengthens the community while gaining acceptance by the outside society as well.

[1]Some did: the Aztec empire, for example, was ruled by political and religious leaders "who had first been trained in schools under rigid priestly supervision." Francis Jennings, The Founders of America (New York: W. W. Norton, Co., 1993), p. 125.

[2]See Herman J. Viola and Carolyn Margolis, Seeds of Change, Five Hundred Years Since Columbus (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991); Jack Weatherford, Indian Givers, How the Indians of the Americas Transformed the World (New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1988); Virgil J. Vogel, American Indian Medicine (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1970); and Donald Grinde, The Iroquois and the Founding of the American Nation (Indian Historian Press, 1977).

[3]Margaret Connell Szasz, Indian Education in the American Colonies, 1607-1783 (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988), p. 4.

[4]Norman T. Oppelt, The Tribally Controlled Indian College: The Beginnings of Self-Determination in American Indian Education (Tsaile, AZ: Navajo Community College Press, 1990), p. 3.

[5]Szasz, Indian Education in the American Colonies, pp. 123-127; Oppelt, pp. 2-3.

[6]Szasz, Indian Education in the American Colonies, pp. 66-77, 189-231.

[7]Oppelt, p. 5.

[8]Ibid., pp. 6, 117.

[9]Senate Report 91-501, Indian Education: A National Tragedy -- A National Challenge (1969), p. 140.

[10]Oppelt, pp. 8-11.

[11]Oppelt, pp. 11-13; William E. Unrau and H. Craig Miner, Tribal Dispossession and the Ottawa Indian University Fraud (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985).

[12]Report of Commissioner of Indian Affairs Edw. P. Smith, Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1873 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1874), pp. 8-9.

[13]Thirty-Second Annual Report of the Board of Indian Commissioners to the Secretary of the Interior, 1900 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1901), p. 7.

[14]See Hazel W. Hertzberg, The Search for an American Indian Identity, Modern Pan-Indian Movements (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1970), esp. pp. 40-53, 79, 136-137.

[15]Oppelt, pp. 21-22.

[16]Robert W. Reising and Douglas W. Schell, "Educational Challenges in Improving the Economic Well Being of the Lumbee Indians of North Carolina," in Thomas E. Schirer and Susan M. Branstner, eds., Native American Values: Survival and Renewal (Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan: Lake Superior State University Press, 1993), p. 22; Karen I. Blu, The Lumbee Problem: The Making of an American Indian People (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 22, 86, 245 note 10; Adolph Dial and David K. Eliades, "Lumbee Indians and Pembroke State University," in Jeanette Henry, ed., The American Indian Reader, Education (San Francisco: The Indian Historian Press, Inc., 1972), pp. 51-53; Oppelt, p. 22. Official 1993 enrollment figures showed 23.5% of the students at Pembroke State University to be American Indian: "1993 Enrollment by Race at 3,400 Institutions of Higher Education," *The Chronicles of Higher Education*, 28 April 1995, p. A30.

[17]Lewis Meriam, et al., The Problem of Indian Administration (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1928), pp. 419-420.

[18]Margaret Szasz, Education and the American Indian, The Road to Self-Determination, 1928-1973 (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1974), p. 135. Szasz points out however that "A group known as the Society of University Indians of America asserted in 1937 that there were several hundred Indians who held 'degrees of higher learning.'" P. 219, note 26.

[19]Oppelt, pp. 24-28; Szasz, Education and the American Indian, p. 114. The paucity of available statistics regarding Indian higher education in this period is frustrating, but also reflects the low priority placed on Indian higher education by both tribes and the federal government, and the lack of access to it for Indian people.

[20]Amanda H. Finley, "Higher Education Aids for Indian Young People," Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Branch of Education pamphlet (May, 1956).

[21]Senate Report 91-501, pp. xi-xiii.

[22]Oppelt, p. 27.

[23]Arthur McDonald, "Why Do Indians Drop Out of College?" in Thomas Thompson, ed., The Schooling of Native America (Washington, D.C.: American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education in collaboration with The Teacher Corps, United States Office of Education, August, 1978), p. 73-74.

[24]Senator Kennedy's Statement in Foreword to Senate Report 91-501, p. x. The recommendations are #27-39, pp. 124-128.

[25]Vine Deloria, Jr., Indian Education in America (Boulder, Co: American Indian Science and Engineering Society, 1991), p. 51. He continued, "one need only look at the fields in which ... fellowships are being given to understand that federal higher education programs were meant to train a generation of people who could function as low-level bureaucrats in drastically underfunded programs which were intended only to keep Indians active and fearful of losing their extra federal funding." Scholarships funded under the 1972 Indian Education Act with 1974 amendments included the fields of medicine, law, engineering, education, forestry and business and included students in both the undergraduate and graduate levels: Oppelt, p. 33.

[26]Information regarding this effort, including statistical information, is sparse. The AIGC itself is now attempting to reconstruct records of students served during the first two decades of the organization's existence.

[27]Oppelt, pp. 21, 94, 96-97. Congress severed IAIA's ties with the BIA in 1988, creating a private Board of Directors which reports directly to Congress.

[28]Interview of Faith Smith by the author, November 29, 1985.

[29]Dr. Sol Tax, "The 1961 Chicago Conference." From "Language Culture Tape #1," recorded at a NAES College conference held at The Newberry Library, November 18, 1985.

[30]Rosalie H. Wax, Ph. D., "A Brief History of the Workshops on American Indian Affairs Conducted for American Indian College Students, 1956-1960, together with A Study of Current Attitudes and Activities of Those Students" Unpublished report, Department of Anthropology, University of Miami, October, 1961, p. 2. In Faith Smith Papers, Community Archives of NAES College.

[31]"General Information" flier put out by American Indian Development, Inc., January, 1962, in Smith Papers; Wax, p. 24.

[32]Discussion with Faith Smith, April 7, 1995.

[33]Wax, pp. 7-9; Carl Tjerandsen, Education for Citizenship, A Foundation's Experience (Santa Cruz, CA: Emil Schwartzhaupt Foundation, Inc., 1980), pp. 58-63; Dorothy R. Parker, Singing an Indian Song, A Biography of D'Arcy McNickle (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), pp. 116, 181.

[34]Vine Deloria, a guest speaker at the 1965 workshop, is one of its critics: Parker, p. 195.

[35]Parker, p. 197.

[36]Oppelt, pp. 104-108.

[37]Ibid., pp. 27-75. In the 1960s and 1970s Indian studies programs were founded on college and university campuses throughout the nation, as part of an increased awareness on the part the higher education community of the need to offer coursework about minorities in American society. By the 1980s 107 such programs had been identified. These programs have been defined as helping colleges meet the demands formulticultural curriculum and faculty, help in the recruitment of minority students and potential links between the campuses and Indian communities. Bobby Wright, "American Indian Studies Programs: Surviving the '80s, Thriving in the '90s," *Journal of American Indian Education* 30:1 (October, 1990), pp. 17, 21.

[38]The percentage of Indian people living off Indian reservations has risen from approximately one third to two thirds in that time. In addition, there were some three hundred federally recognized tribes in the 1970s, while now there are some five hundred and fifty. Especially in the eastern United States there are also a significant number of federally unrecognized tribal communities.

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